

# Continuity and Change in Mexican Migrant Hometown Associations: Evidence from New Survey Research

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## ABSTRACT

Scholars have spent the past two decades researching Mexican hometown associations (HTAs). However, little is known about the variation in clubs organizational structure since studies are largely based on case studies from traditional sending states. Using original survey data, findings reveal that municipal authorities play a more prominent role in the formation of Mexican HTAs and local residents are more engaged in collective remittance projects than previously realized. Moreover, HTA leaders are members of civic associations in both Mexico and the U.S. and maintain a sense of belonging to both societies, suggesting more flexibility in the construction of overlapping collective identities.

*Keywords:* 1. hometown associations, 2. 3x1 Program, 3. Mexico, 4. United States, 5. migrant philanthropy.

## Continuidad y cambio en clubes de oriundos mexicanos en Estados Unidos: Evidencia de una nueva encuesta

### RESUMEN

En las últimas dos décadas, numerosos estudios han analizado a los clubes de oriundos mexicanos; sin embargo, aún sabemos muy poco sobre la variación en la estructura organizativa de éstos, ya que los hallazgos se basan principalmente en estudios de caso de los estados de origen tradicionales. Utilizando datos originales de una encuesta nacional, los resultados revelan que las autoridades municipales juegan un papel más importante en la fundación de los clubes, y que los residentes locales están más comprometidos en los proyectos de remesas colectivas de lo que anteriormente se pensaba. Además, los líderes de estos clubes participan en asociaciones civiles tanto en México como en Estados Unidos y mantienen sentimientos de pertenencia binacionales, lo cual sugiere que la construcción de identidades colectivas es flexible y permite la identificación con más de una identidad nacional.

*Palabras clave:* 1. clubes de paisanos, 2. Programa 3x1, 3. México, 4. Estados Unidos, 5. filantropía migrante.

## *Introduction<sup>1</sup>*

Academics from an array of social science disciplines have spent the last two decades researching migrant hometown associations (HTAs).<sup>2</sup> Migrant HTAs are voluntary civic associations located in the host society organized by immigrants from a common place of origin. In the Americas, U.S.-based Mexican migrant organizations are one of the most visible forms of grassroots philanthropy aimed at supporting migrants' communities of origin. Migrant HTAs differ from other organized migrant groups (*e.g.* legal advocacy groups, farm-workers' rights associations, cultural preservation and education organizations) in that their transnational activities are primarily focused on supporting local public works projects with collective remittances in their places of origin, often in conjunction with public agencies in Mexico. Projects typically include small-scale infrastructure such as potable water systems, electrical grids, drainage and sewage construction, road surfacing and sidewalks, as well as social and recreational projects such as community centers, church rehabilitation, sports courts, rodeo rings, schools, and health clinics. At later stages of organizational development, many HTAs coalesce into state-level federations and expand their focus to engage in broad coalitions addressing multiple issues including the human and political rights of immigrants in sending and receiving countries. More recently, migrant-led HTAs have become active players in U.S.-based advocacy campaigns, most notably in the defense of and lobbying for immigrant rights and reform as evidenced by the widespread marches and demonstrations across U.S. cities in the spring of 2006.

Beginning in the late 1980s, HTAs in several Mexican states participated in a patchwork of state and federal matching funds programs that eventually evolved into the federally institutional-

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<sup>2</sup> In this article, the authors refer to hometown associations also as "migrant clubs".

ized Programa 3x1 para Migrantes (3x1 Program for Migrants), launched in 2002 by the Vicente Fox administration.<sup>3</sup> The 3x1 Program matches, peso for peso, contributions from Mexican migrant clubs and the municipal, state and federal government up to a total of one million Mexican pesos. Since 2012, this program has included the participation of all Mexican states. The public-private partnerships developed and sustained since the inception of the federal program is a source of growing research in academic, policymaking and development banks circles. However very little information is available on the migrant clubs themselves: their geographic location, organizational structure, leadership and membership profile and the similarities and differences between HTAs are across sending states of origin. This article argues that a more complete understanding of how cross-border partnerships between migrant collective agents and labor-sending country government agencies are initiated and structured is a necessary part of the process of evaluating the functioning of the 3x1 Program and the duration of migrant-home country engagement and participation.

While the academic literature addressing HTAs is rich and varied, the bulk of studies are based on small-n case studies and are unable to explain variation across associations. This study fills this research gap by using original survey research on a representative sample of Mexican migrant HTAs in the United States. The cross-sectional data permit analysis of HTAs from different states in Mexico and host cities in the U.S. and helps provide a picture of the organizational differences and varied engagement of key actors (migrants, local citizens in communities of origin and government authorities). The paper addresses the following questions: how do migrant HTA associations originate and what kinds

<sup>3</sup> The program was originally named *Iniciativa Ciudadana 3x1* (3x1 Citizens' Initiative), but HTAs argued funding was not enough to cover many project proposals and lobbied officials at the Ministry of Social Development for changes. In 2004, club leaders' organized pressure on state agents led to significant changes. The program name was changed to *Programa 3x1 para Migrantes* to reflect the central agency of HTAs. The rules also stipulated that program funds are exclusive to HTAs and not open to any Mexican-based civic group as previously allowed.

of actors are most responsible for the creation of clubs? Who are the leaders of these clubs and how does organizational structure and capacity vary?

An analysis of the transnational aspects of human mobility obviously involves the process of understanding the dynamic factors that shape opportunities, incentives, and obstacles to achieving migrant collective action in both sending and receiving countries and the activities generated as a result: transnational civic practices with tangible outcomes. Identifying the characteristics of migrant leaders and the operational structure of the associations is a key step to understanding more about the transnationally engaged population, and also about the extent of their institutional capacity. While there are a host of unobservable factors that shape the ability and desire of individuals to engage collectively, this article demonstrates the following. First, contrary to findings in previous research, migrant club leaders are more likely to have higher levels of educational attainment and have been resident in the U.S. for ten years or less, probably as a result of the increased intervention by municipal authorities to sponsor the creation of new HTAs since 2002. We find that migrant HTA leaders are not only more educated than average Mexican nationals, but also that they are as educated as the majority of Americans. Second, while migrants from the same community are more likely to form their clubs independently, since 2002 (the launch year of the 3x1 Program) clubs have been just as likely to organize at the request of the Mexican municipality of their origin as to come together on their own, signaling a much larger role of local government authorities in club creation than previously realized. Moreover, local citizens in project recipient communities have been found to be far more involved in the selection of projects than previously believed. Future research will need to account for the myriad ways in which non-migrants are actively participating in transnational coproduction of public goods and the social, economic and political spillover effects of these dynamic interactions between state and society motivated by migrants' collective remittances accrued in the United States. Third, HTAs are expanding their

focus beyond their communities of origin in Mexico to participate in U.S.-based civic associations. Results show that many migrant clubs are actively engaged binationally. Lastly, participating in migrant clubs does not deter or substitute for feelings of U.S. national pride or solidarity. Our findings suggest that the transnationally engaged population, those that actively participate in HTAs, perceive themselves as simultaneously being part of both Mexican and American society—maintaining durable connections to both societies “here” and “there”.

*Mexican Migrant Hometown Associations in the United States*

The origin, evolution and proliferation of migrant HTA associations is neither a new phenomenon nor one that is unique to Mexico or Latin American and Caribbean countries. In order preserve connections with the country of origin, migrants across the world have organized into civic associations with different foci, both geographically and thematically. Some migrants organize to socialize and enjoy recreational activities, others get together to pursue a collective political cause in the country of exit or entry, still others pool resources to improve their sending communities. Regardless of the motivation for coming together, some migrants continue to engage in the affairs of places where they no longer physically reside.

While it is the case that the U.S. is a traditional country of immigrant reception, it is not the only country where immigrants engage in transnational practices. And despite the ubiquitous argument that the North American environment is a particularly successful stimulant for associational activity, there is strong evidence that immigrant organizations have formed across the globe (Moya, 2005). There are many similarities in the origin and development of relations between organized HTAs and their home country governments, although there are also diverse historical and geographic patterns to their development. For example, advances in transportation and communications technology now permit greater frequency and ease with which migrants can engage

in the affairs of their home countries, which, while not a deterrent for migrants at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, certainly made regular cross-border engagement more difficult than today.

The Mexico-U.S. migratory network is an ideal case for study because it is the most important migration corridor in the world. The World Bank reports that of the 11.8 million Mexican-born emigrant population, 98 percent settle in the U.S., followed by Canada, Spain and Bolivia (The World Bank, 2011). This concentration of the Mexican migrant population in a single host country makes it possible to hold constant macro-historical conditions such as U.S. and Mexican federal immigration policies that regulate the entry and exit of migrants, and macroeconomic shocks, which helps to isolate key variables that explain variation across HTAs. Focusing the analysis solely on Mexico also clarifies the similarities and differences across traditional and more contemporary states of emigration in Mexico, as well as traditional and more recent migrant settlement patterns in the U.S. Furthermore, both subnational and national levels of the Mexican government implemented outreach programs and initiatives to engage the organized Mexican immigrant population in the U.S., which simplifies the identification of Mexican clubs and data collection efforts. For these reasons, the research scope is restricted to Mexican migrant HTAs in the U.S.

In the past two decades, interdisciplinary migration studies on migrant cross-border engagement have shown the multitude of ways in which migrants, in conjunction with settlement in the immigrant country of reception, continue to stay abreast of and participate in the affairs of their countries of origin. Contrary to the assimilationist framework, migrants continue to engage in social relationships, politics, cultural practices and economic support at the local, regional and national level in their home countries. The many ways that migrants participate (sending remittances, calling home, supporting philanthropic projects, voting in national elections, campaigning for political office and political parties) and the regularity with which a subsection of transnationals do so challenges traditional ideas, meanings, and

practices of political community and citizenship, voice and representation, inclusion and democracy, and the boundaries of civil society and participatory engagement (Glick-Schiller, Bash, and Szanton, 1992; Massey, and Parrado, 1994; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, 1999; Goldring, 2002; De la Garza, and Hazan, 2003; Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller, 2003; Fox, 2005; Smith, and Bakker, 2008; Goodman, and Hiskey, 2008; Duquette, 2011). Migrants' and the HTAs they embody are often socially, politically, and economically engaged in their home countries as well as their host countries.

Understanding more thoroughly the design and function of HTAs as organizations and co-producers of public works in Mexico is useful for evaluating how one should expect collective remittances to improve community development and impact state-society relations in migrants' places of origin. For example, since it is the case that local government authorities and local citizens (non-migrants or "stay-at-homes") are more involved in club creation and project selection than ever before, research must more thoroughly probe the dynamic interactions between the three distinct group of actors' and account for how and why differential engagement shapes and transforms the implementation of 3x1 Program projects. This paper argues that establishing a variation in migrant clubs' organizational setup might provide a first clue into what factors shape different outcomes. Describing the cross-sectional variation in a representative sample of Mexican migrant HTAs across the United States begins to fill the empirical gap in the literature on HTAs in the migration studies and transnationalism literatures, bringing into focus the different agents involved in forming clubs, project implementation, and the organizational challenges facing migrant clubs as they continue to participate in their places of origin.

### *Research Design*

Given the lack of systematic data on Mexican HTAs, Duquette (2011) developed a large-scale original survey instrument informed

by over thirty interviews with migrant club members and Mexican government officials. The survey was disseminated to every registered HTA within the database of organizations maintained by the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior or IME).<sup>4</sup> HTAs usually register with IME in order to become eligible to participate in the 3x1 Program, unless they are a member club of a state-level federation (e.g., Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California). This sampling procedure was designed to capture HTA contact data from all avenues through which they could obtain 3x1 Program matching funds, although it admittedly limits data gathering on clubs that do not register with the IME.<sup>5</sup> Contact data for individual clubs in federations as well as all registered associations that self-identified as a HTA were targeted. In October 2008, every registered HTA president whose organization self-identified as a *club de oriundos* (hometown club) in the IME database of clubs was contacted by telephone. After the initial round of calls, 500 active and inactive clubs with correct contact information were sent a hard-copy mail out survey and over half of the sample was successfully contacted ( $n = 250$  respondents). The total number of failed-to-contact potential respondents was 250. For those clubs that did not wish to provide a home address, an exact copy of the survey was electronically mailed to club presidents.

The dissemination of surveys was completed in five stages over a five-week period, with a break during the general presidential election in November 2008. Completed questionnaires

<sup>4</sup> There are many Mexican HTAs supporting social and development projects in their communities of origin that elect not to register with the IME for a host of reasons. Future research might address similarities and differences between registered and non-registered clubs through snowball sampling methods. Unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>5</sup> This sample includes only “official” clubs that register and may introduce selection bias into the analysis, especially with regard to the role that local, state and federal officials have in club activities. It is important to note, however, that informal non-registered clubs still report the involvement of Mexican public officials in club creation, project selection and management [see for example, López, Escala-Rabadán, and Hinojosa-Ojeda (2001) reports on Oaxacan HTAs in the Los Angeles area].

were collected through July 2009. The survey was a combination of multiple-choice, open answer, and rank order questions written in Spanish. The response rate was 50 percent. In order to ensure that the population of survey respondents was not systematically different from the population of attempt-to-contact non-respondents, difference of means tests were conducted on socio-economic indicators based on the non-respondent contact addresses. Statistical tests on the aforementioned indicators did not reveal sampling bias.

### *Organizational Characteristics of Mexican Migrant Hometown Associations*

A sizable number of studies on Mexican HTAs have studied the traditional sending states of Michoacán, Zacatecas, Puebla, and Jalisco, and to a lesser extent, the predominantly indigenous state of Oaxaca (Espinosa, 1999; Goldring, 2002; Zabin, and Escala-Rabadán, 2002; Lanly, and Valenzuela, 2004; Smith, 2006; Smith, and Bakker, 2008; Bada, 2011). Although these studies are able to capture some variation across Mexican states, no single study has asked the same questions of various groups. Large-n systematic studies are able to complement the qualitative data of such smaller-n research by ensuring the reliability of data and confidence in making generalizations about a wide range of cases.

To date, Portes, Escobar, and Arana (2008), and Orozco (2003) have undertaken the most systematic studies of Mexican HTAs through face-to-face qualitative interview questionnaires. While Orozco's sample of 100 associations is distributed across the U.S., the associations that Portes, Escobar, and Arana (2008) study are restricted to the east coast, where more recent migrants have settled. Despite the limitations on representativeness in these earlier studies, some trends have emerged. This paper seeks to assess whether these trends are constant across its dataset of HTA respondents.

From these two key studies as well as other case-based studies mentioned, researchers contend that the push to create a club is

Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Total Observations of Mexican HTA Respondents by U.S. and Mexican States

U.S. States	Mexican States													Total Freq.														
	Ags.	Camp.	Chih.	D. F.	Dgo.	Gto.	Gro.	Hgo.	Jal.	Mich.	Mor.	Edo.	None		N. L.	Oax.	Pue.	Qro.	S. L.	P.	Sim.	Son.	Tlax.	Ver.	Zac.			
AL	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0		
AK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
AZ	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	0.02	
CA	-	2	-	3	19	1	6	33	10	3	2	-	-	-	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	15	102	0.41	
FL	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
GA	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
ID	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
IL	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	9	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	11	43	0.17	
IN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
MD	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
NE	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
NV	-	-	-	3	1	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	0.04	
NM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
NY	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
NC	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
OH	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.01	
OK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
OR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.01	
PA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
TX	-	-	1	1	2	11	1	1	2	1	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	0.16	
UT	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	0.02	
WV	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
WA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	0.01	
WI	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
None	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	
Total	1	2	4	2	1	10	50	2	12	46	30	5	2	19	2	6	2	6	2	13	1	1	1	1	3	29	250	-
Freq.	0	0.01	0.02	0.01	0	0.04	0.2	0.01	0.05	0.18	0.12	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.12	-	1

Source: Authors' tabulations. Dashes indicate no observations. Some respondents did not indicate geographic location in the U.S. and/or Mexico indicated by "none".

predominantly migrant-led or state-led (Goldring, 2002; Moczuma, 2000; Smith, 2001). HTAs often start out as informal groups that mobilize through grassroots efforts, including soccer clubs, prayer groups, rotating credit organizations (often referred to as *tandas* or *cundinas*), and cultural groups and over time grow into small philanthropic organizations, especially after emergency events in their hometowns. Many clubs also come together for the express purpose of supporting community-based projects. Mexican state-led outreach efforts include state-level government programs such as the Zacatecas and Guerrero matching funds programs in the late 1980s and 1990s, municipal outreach to U.S.-based *paisanos* from high migration areas as well as federal efforts including the former Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME), the establishment of IME and the federal version of the 3x1 Matching Funds Program (Goldring, 2002).

Table 2. Percent of Total HTAs by Period of Club Creation in Sample Population

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Before 1990	6.19
Between 1990-2001	17.33
After 2002	76.45

Source: Authors' tabulations.

However, there are also other avenues through which HTAs come together that are not exclusively migrant-led or state-led. For example, in the case of Jalisco, Fitzgerald (2008) argues that the “Catholic Church, followed by the state, has promoted HTAs as a vehicle for creating and maintaining voluntary ties between origin and destination” (Fitzgerald, 2008:147). Case studies in Oaxaca describe migrants originating from Mexican localities observing *usos y costumbres* (indigenous governance institutions of customary law) forming HTAs to fulfill *tequios*—collective voluntary community improvement efforts and *cuotas*—funds for the construction of community projects and infrastructure (Mason, and Beard, 2008). Researchers also found during interviews with

HTAs in the states of Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas that some HTAs come together at the request of local residents and leaders of civic associations in their communities of origin as a way to fulfill their community *faenas* during prolonged absences (Bada, 2008; Duquette, 2011). To explore the possibility that some respondents came together through an alternative pathway, the survey asks respondents to identify the primary actors responsible for creating the club and provides an “other” category in the event the club came together at the behest of an alternative, non-migrant-led, non-state-led, or non-hometown resident requested mechanism.

There is no real consensus on how HTAs select which community projects to support in the established literature. It is generally believed that decision-making may be a formal or informal event with some elections involved. Orozco (2003) found that older associations, those created before 1995, focus the bulk of their attention on recreational activities or town beautification, while clubs formed after 1995 concentrate their efforts on infrastructure projects. Thus, there is some evidence to suggest that HTA age or survival rate is an important factor in explaining the origin and evolution of associations’ characteristics.

The survey estimates furnish evidence for both grassroots mobilization and government outreach in table 3. Respondents overwhelmingly state that “members of our club came together on their own” (67%), while “the municipal government asked us to form a club” is the second most common answer (17%). Moreover, in cases where respondents report that government authorities were key agents in the formation of the clubs, all HTAs were from the traditional sending states of Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas and created after the launch of the 3x1 Program at levels of statistical significance ( $Pr = 0.025$ , Pearson’s  $\chi^2 = 35.41$ ;  $Pr = 0.01$ , Pearson’s  $\chi^2 = 6.4802$ ).

While migrant membership or municipal government may be primarily responsible for helping the club to form, respondents indicate that project selection is usually carried out by the HTA independently (38%), while 27 percent report selecting projects

*in conjunction with* local community members in project sites, followed by 23 percent reporting projects selection through joint decision-making with municipal government authorities. It is less often the case that club leaders select projects without the input of other club members (9 %). Findings in table 4 suggest that local citizens in migrant hometown communities are more actively engaged in transnational public-private partnerships for the production of public works, which until now had not been measured at the subnational level.<sup>6</sup>

To date, there is very little empirical data on the geographic boundaries of HTA support or data on the extent to which migrant clubs adjust the original focus of their clubs over time to pursue different objectives. Survey respondents were asked about the geographic locations of recipients of club support and whether clubs shifted away from the original focus of forming their club over time. Survey results show that 40 percent of clubs focus their geographic attention at the village level, while 25 percent are involved with more than one village or small town within the same municipality, and 33 percent have a wider geographic focus of several localities in more than one municipality in their home state. These results suggest that outlying communities with much smaller populations than the municipal county seat (*cabecera municipal*) are the greatest recipients of migrants' cross-border financial support.

To determine whether HTA activities are multi-focused, respondents were asked to state additional motivations for club creation. In addition to the *primary* activity, over 67 percent of respondents stated that social, cultural or recreational motivations also played a role in club formation. Almost 59 percent of respondents said that the *original* motivation for creating their club was to finance projects to improve Mexican communities, while the second most popular reason was to promote culture and social gatherings (34 %).

The age of the migrant club is important for understanding how and when a club was created. Clubs formed before the launch

<sup>6</sup> See Duquette (2011) and Bada (2011) for discussions of the role of migrant stay-at-homes in collective remittance financed public-private partnerships.

of the 3x1 Program were more likely ( $Pr = 0.0004$ ) both to come together on their own and to choose projects to support regardless of municipal authority. Thus, older clubs (created before 2002,  $n = 70$  clubs)<sup>7</sup> seem to maintain more autonomy in their selection of community projects than newer clubs, suggesting that HTA maturity improves organizational capacity for successful negotiations with municipal, federal, and state authorities. By contrast, clubs created after 2002 were more likely to have formed at the request of a government authority or citizens of their communities of origin and more likely to select projects in conjunction with government and local community actors. The nature of the origin of migrant clubs does not impact the project selection method; however as reported earlier, government authorities from traditional migrant-sending states are more likely to encourage club formation. Moreover, municipal authorities from the conservative Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)—National Action Party—are more likely to encourage the creation of migrant HTAs than any other national political party ( $Pr = 0.07$ , Pearson's  $\chi^2 = 3.221$ ).<sup>8</sup> The age of the migrant club and party affiliation of the local government (including both active and inactive clubs in the sample), especially whether the club formed before or after the federal launch of the 3x1 Program, are important variables for explaining the actors most responsible for the club coming together.<sup>9</sup> In fact,

<sup>7</sup> Three quarters of the survey sample is between one and seven years old, while a quarter of the sample is older than seven years old, that is, the club formed prior to the launch of the federal 3x1 Program. The newest clubs in the respondent sample was six months old while the oldest club formed in 1969.

<sup>8</sup> Additional socio-demographic data including poverty, population, municipal revenue and political variables such as the competitiveness of elections for each municipality of respondents HTAs are included in the dataset.

<sup>9</sup> The level of migration intensity as measured by the Consejo Nacional de Población (Conapo)—National Population Council—is a significant predictor of a government-created HTA: places that are categorized at having “very high”, “high”, and “medium” levels on the migration intensity index are more likely to have an HTA created by the local government than places with less migration intensity. This suggests that municipal authorities are keen to help organize migrants when they do not emerge through their own collective efforts if there is a sizeable population of *paisanos* abroad.

the survey results of this paper contribute to explaining the selection bias towards *panista* municipalities that previous research had found in a cross-national analysis of 3x1 project approvals (Aparicio, and Meseguer, 2012).

The analysis in this paper suggests that the 3x1 Program created an important domino effect, by increasing the number and spread of HTAs across the U.S. Clubs established prior to 2002 represent only 23 percent of our sample while those created after 2002 account for 76 percent of the total. The results closely mirror the distribution of clubs by age in the general HTA database maintained by IME. This suggests that while spontaneity is an important factor for organization emergence, the instrumental pull created by the 3x1 Program produces financial incentives to increase the scope of infrastructure projects, develops new partnerships with state and local governments that seek to release additional funds to buttress domestic budget constraints, and improves institutional capacity in places of destination.

*Table 3. Agents Responsible for Creation of Club*

<i>Who is most responsible for the original creation of your club?</i>	<i>Total percent of respondents</i>
Club came together independently	67.26
State government	1.19
Consulate or other Mexican government agency	5.95
Municipal government in Mexico	17.26
Local community members' suggestion	7.74
Other	0.6

*Source:* Authors' tabulations.

Little is known about the extent of democratic decision-making in these associations. What kinds of procedures do HTAs use to make important club decisions? Democratic decision-making is understood as methods of decision-making that incorporate the majority of voices of club members. The variables that proxy for different organizational democratic practices in the survey include: *a)* how most decisions are made in the club, *b)* how leadership is selected, and *c)* the regularity with which club leadership

changes over time. When asked how club leadership is selected, 42 percent of respondents said that the membership chose its leader(s) through a formal voting process, while slightly less, 32 percent, indicated that a board of directors or a combination of other methods names leadership. Club leadership does not change regularly. Over 70 percent of respondents said that their leaders do not change after a set period of time.

*Table 4.* Method of Project Selection

<i>How do you normally select the projects that receive most of your club's support?</i>	<i>Total percent of respondents</i>
Choose from government list	3.17
Local community members help decide	26.98
Club leadership selects projects	8.99
Decision made by club membership	38.10

*Source:* Authors' tabulations.

Given the relative “youth” of the sample in this paper, it may be the case that clubs’ organizational strategies are adapted as clubs age because HTAs learn about other organizations through their social networks and mimic the structure of other clubs in a kind of organizational isomorphism. In order to understand whether a given club’s organizational structure was affected by other clubs, survey respondents were asked about the extent to which their club “has been influenced by other hometown associations, federations, or the like, in how you organize your club or conduct your activities (for example: decision-making, project selection or implementation, fundraising or leadership selection)”. There was considerable variation in how the club perceives its transnational social learning (García, 2005). Clubs were slightly more inclined to perceive their club as not being influenced by other HTAs than as being moderately or very influenced by other clubs’ operational setup (table 5). Moreover, frequency distributions did not reveal that the age of the club or membership in a state-level federation had any impact on a club’s perceived level of organizational isomorphism, specifically structural mimicry of

*Table 5. Organizational Isomorphism*

<i>HTA believes its club organizational structure is influenced by other clubs?</i>	<i>Total percent of respondents</i>
No	36.4
A little	30.3
Moderately	21.8
A lot	11.5

*Source:* Authors' tabulations.

other clubs. These findings suggest that a small proportion of the sample sees its club as being heavily influenced by other HTAs and state-level federations, and the numbers go up with decreasing influence. Overall, one can conclude that there is generally some inter-club learning, but not a substantial amount. Results offer new insight into organizational development. It appears that clubs are not completely isolated from other HTAs even controlling for whether the club is a member of a state-level federation of clubs, although the extent to which linkages, communication and information sharing with other HTAs informs how clubs decide to structure their decision-making and organizational practices is rather limited.

*Table 6. Method of Club Decision-Making*

<i>How does your club make most decisions about club activities?</i>	<i>Total percent of respondents</i>
Board of directors	13.69
Formal membership vote	31.55
Groups/committees	41.67
Consensus	10.12
Other	2.98

*Source:* Authors' tabulations.

*Demographic Profile and Binational Civic Engagement:  
Does Context Matter?*

Immigrant HTA leadership is said to belong to an older cohort and are a more settled group of the Mexican-born population living

in the U.S. that have reached significant levels of economic activity (Portes, Escobar, and Arana, 2008; Fox, and Bada, 2011). For example, Portes, Escobar, and Arana (2008) conclude:

education leads to greater transnational involvement, with both a high school diploma and a college degree greatly increasing participation in such activities ... transnational politics are not a feature of the most recent or poorest immigrants but rather, on the contrary, of settled, married adults, with a higher level of education and more experience living in American society (see also Orozco, 2003; Zabin, and Escala-Rabadán, 1998).

Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample in this paper find support for this argument with some important exceptions.

First, while survey respondents are more educated than Mexican nationals, there is less support for the contention that a longer period of time in the U.S. host society increases the likelihood of transnational immigrant engagement. Survey results show that 18 percent of the HTA sample have lived in the U.S. uninterruptedly for fewer than two years, 55 percent have lived in the United States between 2 and 10 years, and 25 percent have resided in the U.S. for over 11 years (about 2 % of respondents were born in the United States, raised in Mexico, and subsequently returned to the U.S.). The fact that 73 percent of the sample have lived in the United States for 10 years or less suggests that a longer length of stay in the host society is not a necessary pre-condition for establishing an HTA. Rather, immigrants that have become settled, but have not spent more than 10 years in the U.S. and still maintain close social connections with family and friends back home are more likely to lead migrant HTAs than other immigrants that are very new arrivals or have been in the U.S. for a much longer period of time.

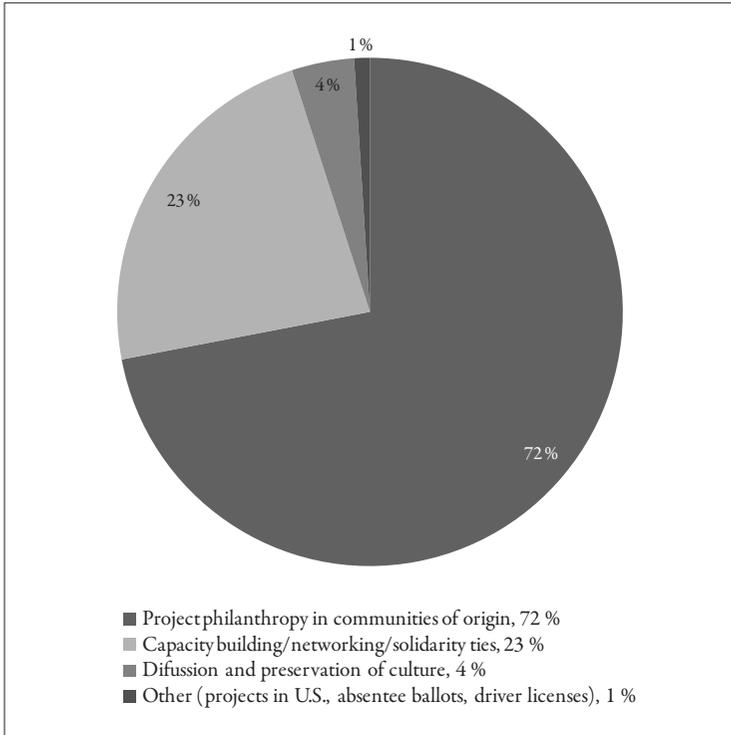
Results suggest that the transnationally engaged migrant leadership population is a well-educated group, demonstrating support for the long-standing hypothesis that socio-economic status is a significant predictor of different kinds of civic and political participation (Verba *et al.*, 1993). Results show that 14 percent of respondents have completed middle school, while the major-

ity of migrants have completed high school. In fact, about 40 percent of respondents report at least some university education and many have received additional tertiary education. Not only have the Mexican migrants leading HTAs received a higher level of education than average Mexicans (middle school education), they are arguably as educated as the majority of Americans (secondary school graduates).

Finally, to round out the socio-demographic characteristics of club leadership and size of clubs, migrant HTA leadership is predominantly male, married and between the ages of 30-64 years (53 percent between 30-44; 41 percent between 45-64 years) confirming previous characterizations of HTAs as male-dominated institutions with very few women in leadership positions (Zamudio, 2005). The survey shows that clubs are, on average, comprised of 123 members (standard deviation is 435, and club size ranges between 2 and 5 000 members) and the largest clubs tend to be from the traditional immigrant receiving states of California, Illinois and Texas. Perhaps surprisingly, the new destination immigrant host states North Carolina, Utah, Nevada and Indiana are home to clubs with membership size of over 150 individuals.

Much remains to be learned about HTAs' perceived challenges and accomplishments. What do clubs see as the most important obstacles to their continued success and what do they believe are their most valued accomplishments? A content analysis of answers to two open-ended survey questions revealed that contributing toward producing public goods and services in communities of origin is, by far, HTAs greatest self-perceived achievement (72 %). Improving institutional capacity (23 %) is the second most cited achievement, which includes club survival, organizational infrastructure, access to networking opportunities in the U.S., and solidarity ties among *paisanos*. Only two organizations mentioned absentee ballots to vote in Mexico, access to international driver licenses and binational civic engagement as their major accomplishments, which is predictable considering that the bulk of the organizations began operations after 2002 and binational advocacy agendas are more likely to begin at the hometown fed-

eration level, as has been the case for Zacatecanos, Jaliscienses, Guanajuatenses, Oaxaqueños, and Michoacanos.

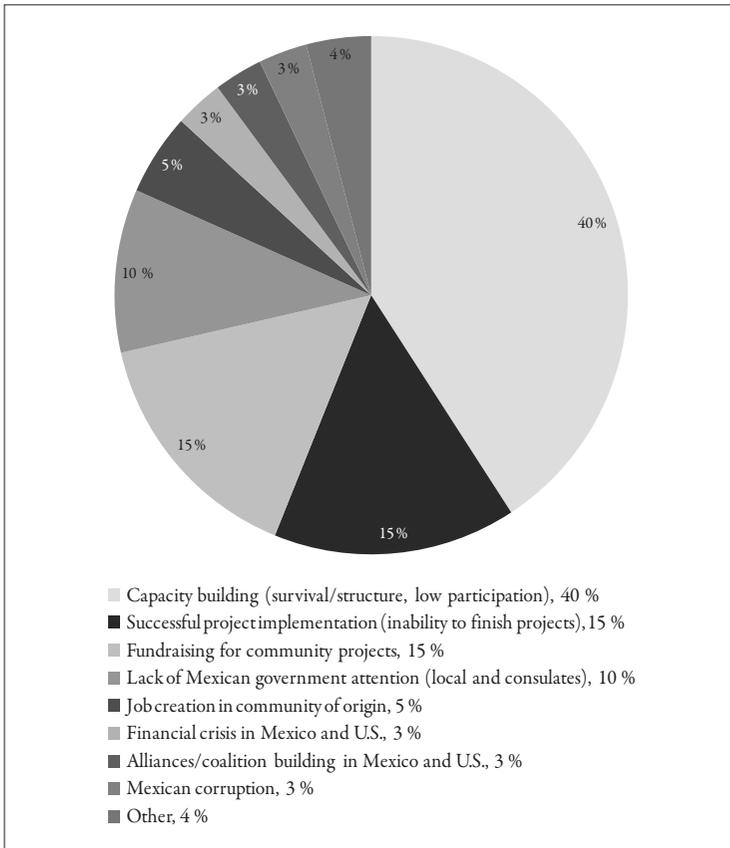


Source: Survey questionnaire, open response, N = 142.

Graph 1. Major Accomplishments of HTAS, by Percent of Respondents

The challenges facing these organizations reveal a more diverse set of problems: 40 percent said that the main obstacles were figuring out how to improve organizational capacity, foster additional participation of members, encourage more solidarity with club members and develop the ability to keep their club organized. Also, respondents said the inability to finish projects successfully and raise sufficient funds (15 %) were important challenges, as well as the lack of government attention, mostly at the municipal level, but also in consulates across the United States (10 %). Results also reveal that keeping clubs active with the second-generation might be a challenge. Respondents were asked: “Do

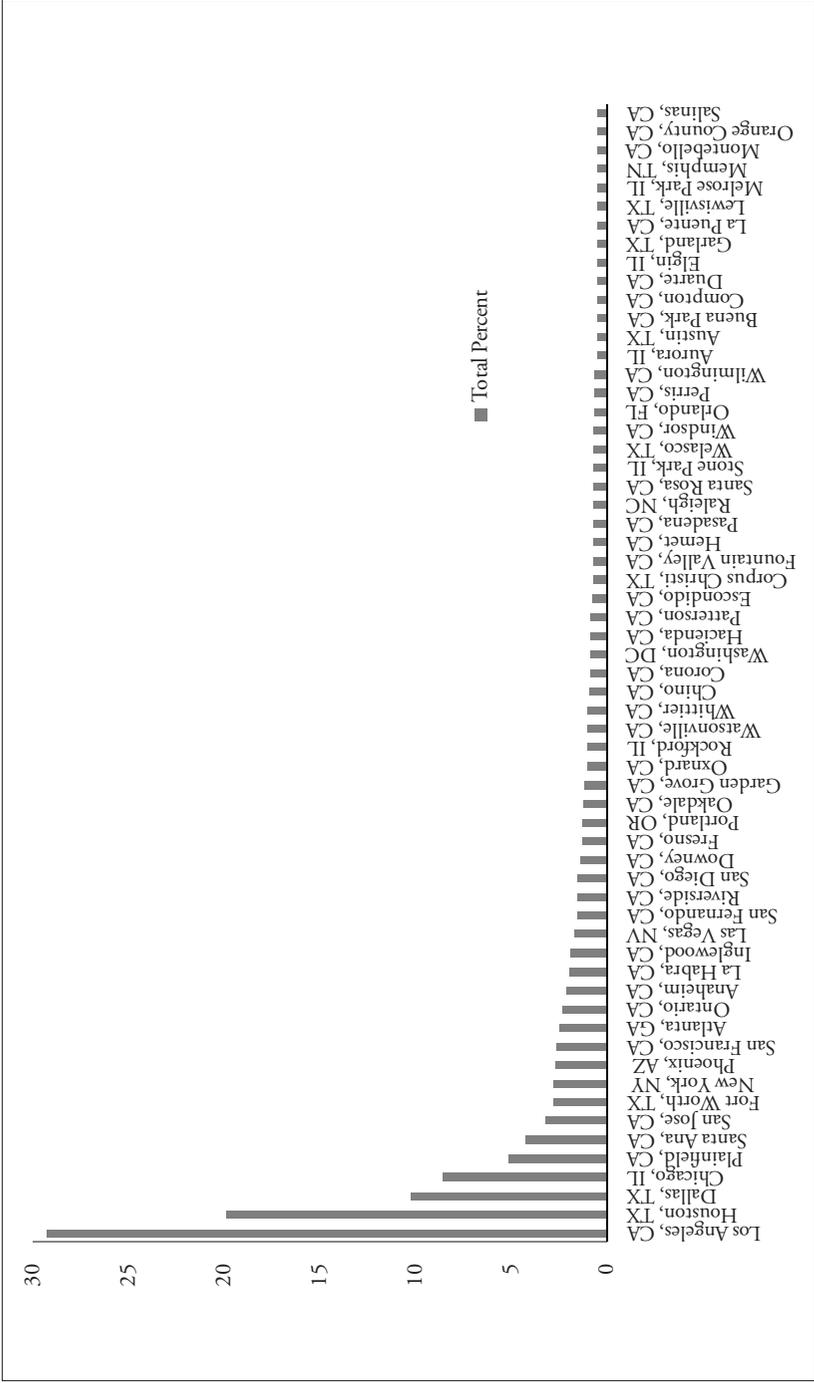
you think that the children of club members and future generations will take an interest in maintaining the activity of your club into the future?” Slightly over half the sample replied they were “unsure” (57 %), while slightly less were more confident in the second-generation’s involvement in club participation (36 %), while approximately seven percent did not think the younger cohort would keep the club going.



Source: Survey questionnaire, open response,  $N = 131$ .

*Graph 2.* Major Challenges Facing HTAs, by Percent of Respondents

Over the last decade, HTAs have begun to transform the exclusively trans-local nature of their involvement with communities of origin in Mexico in order to pursue issues of interest to club



Source: "Base de datos con proyectos aprobados. Programa 3x1 para Migrantes" (Sedesol, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007).

Graph 3. Highest Concentration of HTAs by U.S. City, 2006 and 2007

members in the U.S. host state. HTAs are broadening their agendas and geographical scope. An important transformation in the organizational scope of these groups has been the adoption of new political agendas; of particular note is the increased attention and involvement in the defense of migrants' citizenship rights and the politics of inclusion in the United States. This shift is related to the different nature of contexts of reception in U.S. states and cities ranging from active incorporation to neutrality to hostile legislation designed to identify and deport immigrant groups (Fox, and Bada, 2011). Differences in public policies towards immigrant incorporation can partly explain the difference in the consolidation and scope of activities of HTAs at least in Los Angeles and Chicago. This paper shows that the geographic concentration of HTAs mimics traditional immigrant settlement locations in the U.S.

The remarkable growth of Mexican migration during the 1990s, its concentration in specific states, as well as the demographic, socio-economic, and legal profile of this population, reveal not only its increasing density but also its vulnerability as various states have begun to adopt anti-immigrant state legislation that threatens to compromise undocumented migrants' access to public services and deport individuals without documentation. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in certain U.S. states and the accompanying public policies directly target Mexican undocumented migrants and other immigrant groups. U.S. cities respond differently to the undocumented migrant's plight. Some local and state governments have steadily increased their anti-immigrant climate, while others have adopted a more nuanced response. In cities with integrationist policies, it is common to find greater involvement of immigrant organizations in several issues related to immigrant integration policies. In 2007, a year after the massive immigrant mobilizations of 2006, states with the largest foreign-born populations such as California, New York, Illinois and Texas were more likely to introduce legislation to expand immigrant rights, regulate human trafficking, address integration policy, and provide language access services. By contrast,

legislatures in new destination states including South Carolina and Nevada introduced bills contracting immigrant rights (Laglagaron *et al.*, 2008).

Recent policy reports on Mexican HTAS cite their relative isolation from mainstream U.S. institutions as one of their most pressing challenges (Somerville, Durana, and Terrazas, 2008). However, in the last decade, HTAS have become more visibly engaged in local issues. For instance, the active participation of HTAS in unionization campaigns and the immigrant marches of 2006 offer an idea of the new diversity on their agendas. Among the 160 cities across the U.S. that participated in at least one march or protest during the immigrant rights movement of 2006, HTAS had a modest representation in 31 (20 %) of those cities. However, in 2007, just one year after the historic marches, the used in this paper data indicate the presence of Mexican HTAS in 65 cities with immigrant protests recorded the previous year, signaling a 100 percent increase from 20 percent in 2006 to 41 percent in 2007. There are confirmed accounts of HTAS' active protest engagement in global cities such as Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and San Jose and medium-size<sup>10</sup> ones such as Fresno, and Las Vegas. Although it is impossible to determine the extent and specificity of HTAS' engagement with immigrant rights advocacy in those 65 cities with visible pro-immigrant movements, these numbers invite further inquiry into HTAS simultaneous agendas in Mexico and the United States (Fox, and Bada, 2011).

Recent quantitative evidence suggests that involvement in transnational activities has led to greater interest in U.S. politics, thus contradicting Samuel Huntington's now famous hypothesis of transnational incorporation, which argues that participation in home country politics decreases the possibilities of civic and political involvement in U.S. politics. For instance, McCann, Cornelius, and Leal (2009) find a positive and highly significant correlation between Mexican immigrants' engagement in Mexi-

<sup>10</sup> In the United States, medium-size cities average population is less than half a million.

can and U.S. public affairs. In a different analysis studying the practices of Dominican, Salvadoran, and Mexican immigrants, Jongho Lee (2007) argues that participation in transnational activities tends to encourage Latino immigrants to become civically engaged in the host society. In contrast, a recent study analyzing political behavior of Latino immigrants holding dual nationality in the U.S. suggests that binational engagements seem to be negatively associated with political integration into the host society. However, researchers do not rule out the fact that generational replacement will resolve the negative influence of dual nationality on political connectedness, suggesting that the second generation will likely diminish participation in their immigrant parents' home country politics and become more involved in U.S. political affairs (Staton, Jackson, and Canache, 2007).

Frequency distributions reported in table 7 shows that HTAS maintain interest in domestic civic affairs by participating in U.S.-based civic associations (33 %) while slightly fewer HTA leaders are actively engaged in both U.S.-based and Mexican-based civic associations (24 %). In sum, over 50 percent of the sample population participates in U.S. civic associations, while some participate on both sides of the border in addition to the activities associated with their HTAS, whose exclusive participation in civic associations based in Mexico is much lower at 15 percent. An analysis of the data by state of residence shows interesting variations in cities with over three decades of HTAS. For instance, for Illinois-based HTAS, 39 percent of HTA members participate in U.S. civil society while six percent participate in Mexican civil society and 19 percent participate binationally. Texan HTAS are the most engaged in both U.S. (28 %) and Mexican civic associations (20 %) while California-based HTAS are twice as engaged in Mexican society as Illinois HTAS (14 %). One interpretation of this result is that geographical proximity to the border affects the propensity to engage with Mexican organizations. Moreover, length of time living in the U.S. does not seem to impact U.S. civic binational participation. Of the respondents who engage exclusively in civic associations in the U.S. (and not in Mexico), 71 percent have lived in the

U.S. 10 or less years, whereas of the respondents who participate in civic associations in both the U.S. and Mexico, 64 percent have lived in the U.S. for 10 years or less.

This research shows that Mexican migrant HTA leaders are more likely to participate in U.S. civic organizations than in Mexican civil society. There is very little evidence to support the fact that civic engagement in American society is to be less expected from migrants. Whether participants are emboldened to participate collectively in American affairs by discriminatory legislation like Proposition 187 in California, the Sensenbrenner Bill and/or immigration reform policies, their engagement in cross-border activities like HTAs does correlate with participation in U.S. associational activity and is not restricted to more middle-class migrants. In this sample, recent transplants to the United States with as little as a middle school education are just as likely to participate in U.S. civic associations as more educated and established migrant leaders. The simultaneous affiliation of HTA members to U.S. and Mexican civic institutions shows flexibility in the construction of multiple and often overlapping collective identities across two nations, proving that particular affiliations can be seen as complementary rather than conflicting. Many Mexican migrants living in the United States identify themselves as migrant workers, union members, Mexican voters, Mexican citizens, naturalized U.S. citizens, Latin American and Latino immigrants, Guadalupan Catholics and Evangelical Christians, among other affiliations.

*Table 7. Binational Civic Engagement*

<i>Are you and your club members active in any other kinds of civic associations in addition to your HTA, in the U.S. or in Mexico?</i>	<i>Total percent</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>IL</i>	<i>TX</i>
In Mexico	15	14	6	20
In the United States	33	38	39	12
In neither the U.S. nor Mexico	28	24	35	40
In both Mexico and the U.S.	24	24	19	28

*Source:* Authors' tabulations.

Table 8. Club Variation across Traditional Sending States

<i>Distribution of respondents in traditional sending states for selected survey questions</i>				
	<i>Guanajuato</i>	<i>Jalisco</i>	<i>Michoacán</i>	<i>Zacatecas</i>
<i>How does your club make the majority of club decisions?</i>				
Leadership	11	21	9	31
Formal vote	18	57	41	19
Board/committees	58	7	27	42
Informal consensus	8	14	23	8
Other	5	0	0	0
<i>How does your club select the majority of community projects?</i>				
List from local government	3	3	0	8
Local residents tell us	30	16	29	46
Club membership selects	33	38	43	35
Club leadership selects	5	16	11	0
Government and HTA together	30	27	18	12
<i>Who was most responsible for the original creation of your club?</i>				
On our own	66	76	87	64
State government	0	0	0	0
Consulate/other agency	5	3	4	0
Municipal government	18	14	4	28
Locals asked	11	7	4	8
<i>Are you involved in any other civic association in Mexico or the U.S.?</i>				
Yes, in Mexico	22	17	9	4
Yes, in the U.S.	24	38	35	39
Neither country	41	21	26	30
In both Mexico and the U.S.	14	24	30	26
<i>Average age of club</i>	4 years	7 years	9 years	9 years
<i>Membership in state-level federation</i>				
No	69	7	13	0
Yes	31	93	87	100

Source: Authors' tabulations.

There is a contentious debate within the transnationalism literature concerning whether participating in a migrant HTAs has any impact on simultaneous feelings of belongingness of the HTA to the host society and sending society (Waldinger, 2008), a topic related to binational civic engagement. Researchers have very few quantitative measurements of how (if at all) HTAs cross-border activities in their communities of origin stimulate or preserve feelings

of transnational connectedness with Mexican society and American society and whether there is any impact of this transnational participation on perceptions of connectedness. Respondents were asked if participating in HTAs and helping their communities of origin made them feel both “here” (American society) and “there” (Mexican society) at the same time. An overwhelming 90 percent of respondents agreed with this statement. While this question does not end the debate, it does reveal some new evidence that participating in migrants’ communities of origin does not substitute for or prevent the civically engaged migrant population from feeling part of American society. Rather, transnationally engaged migrants are capable of actively participating in and perceiving themselves as simultaneously part of two societies.

In light of this new context, the increasing civic and political participation among Mexican HTAs is revealing in several ways. The groups’ incorporation of concepts such as human rights, migrants’ rights, membership, and citizenship into their agendas indicates that they have established ties with other groups based on shared goals, which in turn reveals an expansion of their networks and their organizational sphere. Nevertheless, the strengthening of these links does not suggest that this convergence precludes an inexorable path towards the traditional assimilationist approach. Rather, this participation suggests the possible confluence of different groups, organizations, and identities in the strengthening of their new nation’s civic and political life. Despite their possible cultural resemblances to and differences from other groups and communities, HTAs can sustain and reinforce their own regional and national identities.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Previous research has argued that Mexican HTAs were primarily interested in supporting social infrastructure projects in their places of origin and improving government policies towards migrant communities in Mexico. The results of this paper show that in the last two decades, HTAs have expanded their agendas and are

increasingly engaged in civic organizations and social and political issues in the United States.

In terms of institutional capacity and decision-making procedures for community development projects, these results reveal an increased propensity to consult with the stay-at-home community and local governments for project selection, thus offering possibilities for creating more equitable, inclusive public-private partnerships for cooperation in community development in migrants' places of origin.

The role played by the 3x1 Program in the establishment of new HTAs had been previously underestimated. While the program's main goal is the improvement of development infrastructure aimed at preventing further migration, it also recognizes the importance of community empowerment and strengthening transnational relations with *paisanos* in its regulations. While it is not yet clear whether the program has accomplished the goal of improving public goods provision (especially in the poorest localities in Mexico) or deterring future migration, the results of the survey reviewed in this paper shows that the 3x1 Program has been an effective catalyst for the creation of new clubs and their spread across the U.S. Moreover, the matching component of the federal program is an incentive for resource-strapped municipal governments, to focus on public works and other infrastructure projects, to locate their *paisanos* and encourage the formation of a public-private partnership to coproduce projects in tandem (Duquette, 2011). This paper also shows that local government authorities affiliated with the PAN political party are much more likely to actively encourage the formation of new HTAs, especially from localities with significant emigration.

This research provides crucial information on Mexican migrant HTAs, confirming some previous analyses, challenging others, and perhaps most importantly, expanding the range of variables of interest including decision-making structure, project selection mechanisms, leadership socio-demographic characteristics, and civic binational engagement. Future research should address additional factors that shape the emergence and evolution of HTAs,

taking into account how particular social, political and economic features of their community of origin play a role and the ways in which the participation of local government authorities and local citizens in migrants' places of origin in the 3x1 Program produces different kinds of outcomes. Moreover, the way the second-generation's involvement or lack thereof in migrant hometown associations might change the degree and kinds of activities clubs pursue across national borders will also be of particular interest, especially as migrant HTA leadership continues to age and clubs diversify their interests to incorporate U.S.-based issues focused on democratic inclusion and incorporation.

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